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Interview with Reverend Bill Maloney

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TRANSCRIPTION
INTERVIEW with REVEREND BILL MALONEY
By Edward Seitz

(Approximately 1 minute 9 seconds of captured conversation)

EDDIE SEITZ: Alright here we go—alright so this is um—my name is Edward Seitz and we're doing—interviewing Reverend Bill Maloney— right—for the Oral History Project the Columbia College Chicago archives and Honors Oral History project the Chicago 68' part of the collaboration with the Council of religious leaders at the Metropolitan Chicago. Today is May 1st of 2015 and we're doing the interview at Reverend Maloney's house in Willowbrook and you are a religious activist. What year were you an activist around 68?

BILL MALONEY: Well I don't know that anybody used term I've been called a lot of things but I'm not sure I've ever been called that before so—I was, in the time you're talking from November 1965 I was a pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in the loop which was then located at both 327 S. LaSalle and 25 W. Jackson for the corner of Jackson and Plymouth court and—from the very beginning of the 68 Democratic Convention we were involved with all of this stuff, all the way through the conspiracy trial. Basically out of accident, not because we planned anything—we didn't plan anything. The accident was where we were located at during the time of the trial. For example, the conspiracy seven trial—the minute he kicked off the judge Haufman declared that around the federal building where it was taking place on the north side of Jackson Street that the press was not permitted to come on the property of the federal building. That meant the lobbies and all of the sidewalks around the building so the press had two possibilities left—one was to walk in the door of Christ the King Lutheran Church which had a sign on the front that said open welcome come in. Or they could stand in the middle of Jackson Boulevard in see how soon a semi would hit them. They chose to come into the church and sit around and use our telephone and drink our coffee and yeah they made to place home. The place was also paid home by the Chicago Police Department—the police off the street would come in to get warm in the winter time and they'd sit and have coffee so that the demonstrators that were out on the street at that time would stand out in front of the street and yell at the cops—and then both of then would come in our church and have coffee together.

ES: Wow.

BM: So you know— we, we were not activists as you used the word a minute ago in doing anything. We were responding to a need right outside our front door I mean wasn't any escaping it.

ES: Okay.

BM. I mean we had space and so—we permitted people to come in and that took off and that became such an easy thing for example during the trial that when the trial was over the press had their meeting with the conspiracy seven because it was—what month was that—I forgot it's in the book we can look it up if you want

ES: Okay. We're going to go into a little bit more detail—we don't have to jump right into 68' we'll build up there

BM: Okay

ES: But I just wanted to make sure we understood where you were at at the time.

BM: Yes.

ES: You know—Around 68'

BM: You know that was—the end of it was a conspiracy trial. People came over to our place and met with the press and there was one press guy who took a picture of the whole bunch of them sitting on the floor in front of our altar and the next—two days later—the next day—excuse me—that picture was on the front page of the New York Times and we got huge letters from other Lutheran congregations who were just very angry about what we were doing and it just spiraled into—so that's that broad picture so I would argue that activism was wrong word. We were trying to be neighbors in ministry—serving the needs of people in the neighborhood that's all.

ES: Okay, alright so I would love to—for you to tell me whem you were born and where you were born.

BM: When I was born. 1936…[REDACTED]…in East Liverpool, Ohio.

ES: Alright and you were raised in East Liverpool as well?

BM: Yes.

ES: Okay. Tell me a little about your mother and father?

BM: Well mom was a girl and dad was a boy. Is that what you wanted to know?

ES: Yeah just give me a little bit more about maybe where your father grew up or your mother grew up?

BM: My dad grew up in East Liverpool six blocks away from where I grew up. My mother grew up in eastern Pennsylvania about 40 miles outside of Philadelphia. In a family that over back in that chair over there is a deed from Anne(?) and William—no Anne(?) and John Penn conveying that the family farm into her family from John and Anne(?) Penn and John and was William Penn's brother and the date on that deed is

sometime in the mid 1700s—1750. Mom grew up on that farm my grandfather—her father sold that farm in 1948— it had been in the family more than two centuries—and Dad in East Liverpool and except for two years spent all of his life in east Liverpool.

ES: Okay. So, what was it like growing up—in the house that you grew up in?

BM: I think pretty normal. I mean—you know I did a lot of stuff in school and my parents supported all of it. I was the editor of the school newspaper. I spent Christmas vacations a number of times at a special school that—I understand is still going on at Columbia College in—where you stole the name your school the Columbia University in New York City—and which did a course for kid's who were interested in journalism. I did that for several years at Christmas vacation time—so we had a normal family dad was businessman. He was in the grocery business. When I was old enough, I would go to his store on Saturday evening with him and clean the meet stuff— you know—clean the meet machines and all that stuff. So, we—you know—dad was not around a lot because of his business and so we learned other ways of dealing with him and for me it was going to the business and working in the meat department cleaning stuff on Saturday night. So it was a normal—you know—anything abnormal was grade school—was a horrible experience because— let's see from's my second—third year—in grade school to the eighth grade we lived directly across the street from the principal. So, by the time I walked home after school, she had walked home and was out front talking to my mother about all the stuff I had pulled that day. So (grandfather clock starts to ring loudly) there wasn't much to get away with in grade school. But it was pretty normal. I had two sisters —one of them competent the other one incompetent. (long pause) So you know that was seventy something years ago or so—I saw both of them two weeks ago in Toledo, Ohio. One of them the same—one of them is still incompetent—and the other one is very competent (laughs).

ES: What were some of your duties around the house—did you have chores.

BM: You didn't—no. You didn't help mom do much. Mom only dealt with the kitchen — that was her world. She was a Pennsylvania Dutchman—she had two degrees in home ecnomics—she taught home economics in school for a while and she ran that kitchen and was terribly proud of running that kitchen—and you know, she lived in that kitchen and you didn't disturb her in there—that was her place. You know, I made her mad sometimes because I told her that all the training she had in home economics and her mother who just threw stuff in a bucket was a better cook than she was. She'd bristle a little bit at that but you know it was a fun place. I remember one time my dad got one of the meat people at the store to give him a pigs head—just the head of a pig. Pap took it home and put in on moms counter in the kitchen and walked out and of course a bit later she'd walk in and you could hear her across the river I guess. (grandfather clock strikes in the background). There was nothing abnormal about.

ES: Okay, I see you had some pretty good meals then I guess?

BM: Oh yes! This is yo see the result of her cooking yes.

ES: So, Were you a bit of a troublemaker as an youngster?

BM: I tried hard, yes. Yes.

ES: Tell me little bit about that you said

BM: Oh Geeze.

ES: You said the principle would come home and tell your mom—

BM: Well the principle—you know in school—I was— my major in grade school and most of high school was travel. Most of the work I took involved travel. I was either on my way to the principals office or on my way back from the principles office. I was in all kinds of things —you know—not the other crazy kid stuff, but the stuff the principles dislike— but it was not stuff that got—you know—I was never arrested, I was never in jail. (long pause) I have been in jail a couple times bailing people out. (long pause) I didn't think it was anything —there was nothing I did that I think as being tremendously evil.

ES: Can you give me an example of just maybe something you remember you doing that your mom would—you know—you come home and your mom found out about?

BM: I can't think of an example anymore, that's too far ago. You know it's bad enough for me that I can't remember what I had for breakfast.

ES: That's okay. So, how was religion observed in your house?

BM: That was a very strong element in all of our lives because mom and dad were both active Lutherans. As they say, mom the Pennsylvania Dutchman. My dad was president and vice president of the Lutheran Lake of the state of Pennsylvani— and that's in fact how they met the early 30s at Luther Lake meetings in mid-Pennsylvania and—that had been a very strong element in both our lives—so it was in ours— I mean we were in church every Sunday morning, we were in Sunday school every Sunday morning. Mom taught Sunday school, dad was a number of times superintendent of the Sunday school. Their entire lives were involved in the church and that's how they— that was apart of their existence and therefore a very strong part of our growing up. (long pause) I didn't decide to go into the ministry until I (respond ???) mid college—There were several people who've been very influential in my life. One was a Presbyterian minister and the other was the disciples of Christ minister— Dr. Beach(?) and so one thing led to another and I had for a while committed to doing a career in radio journalism and—I don't know I just—that slipped away somewhere in the middle college and I decided to go to seminary.

ES: Okay, so give me a little bit about like what your first day of high school was like so now

BM: Oh my—are you serious?

ES: If you can remember—

BM: You can't be serious. Geeze. I have no idea. I have no idea. My first day in high school—I have no idea I worked at the newspaper and one of my favorite professors was the journalism professor. (coughing) I was the caller announcer for the football games in that Ohio Valley football and big big big deal— and so every football game I was in the booth doing that the color stuff not the play-by-play stuff. Beyond that (long pause) — What I most remember about high school was the two deans. There was a dean of men and a dean of women. They were married, husband and wife, and their name was Dawson. They were both about 4 feet high and it was kind of weird to see Burt Dawson yelling at a bunch of kids about doing something and this little pip squeak telling us what to do. They were very neat people.

ES: Did you get a lot out in trouble a lot in high school or no you pretty much?

BM: You know it wasn't as bad a gradeschool. Yea Bert Dawson and I were good friends— he came to me at graduation and shook my hand briskly and said I want to congratulate you I was so proud of you tonight in that procession coming into the auditorium you were the only person who was in step. Okay —that was his way of saying you can get your right foot in front of the right foot for all the tea in China. But no—I didn't do that kind of nasty things that I did in gradeschool.

ES: Okay so because you were on the newspaper were you very in the know about the current events going on in the world?

BM: No because we didn't considered of the world apart of news of the high school so all that was going on in the high school would've been part but in terms of you— know you— you could be fighting World War III across the river and we wound't pay attention. If it happening in the building that was another matter, there we would be. But no. It was not something we made a big deal about I'm not sure about a lot of what we do today in school is not —over emphasized— to mess our heads up about what reality should that—you know— that we get stuff out of whack too easily. Don't take yourself too seriously.

ES: My most—I don't have many moments of which I was proud. My proudest was in Cincinnati, Ohio in the nineteen—early 1970s—I had been in Chicago since 1965 and my music director was Thomas Willis. Tom (loud grandfather clock striking) was the music critic for the Chicago Tribune and he was on the graduate faculty of the school of music at Northwestern Evanston (???) graduate PhD in music history from Yale. Tom took me along because he needed equipment like this to do a speech with the national music educators convention which was then in Cincinnati—after two or three days of meetings and we got all the stuff done, Tom decided to introduce two or three of us who were with him—typical of Tommy said in the introduction— he said Bill is back in Chicago my

Paster and because I am his music director he is my boss— and he said what I like most about him is that age —over 30 years of age— he still hasn't quite figured out what he's going to be when he grows up—that was the neatest thing I've ever heard. Don't take yourself too seriously. I'm sorry I'm talking too much

ES: That's okay, no it's fine. That is really good advice I really like that. Okay, so now I just walk through maybe—how did you decide to want to go to Youngstown and what your friends think about that? (grandfather clock strikes) Like when your—you know—becoming a senior in high school, how did that come about that you found out about Youngstown?

BM: (grandfather clock strikes) Phew! Well, I didn't go to Youngston first— I went to Ohio university first and I spent one year there and worked in the radio station—and at the end of the year is was very clear to my advisers, who made it very clear to me, with a couple of bangs of two-by-fours on the far forehead— that I was spending more time running a radio station then I was trying to study philosophy and that kind of stuff. So, I decided that I was either going to run the radio station and—you know— and get a secondhand education or I was going to have to leave Ohio and go someplace else. So, I probably went to Youngstown because it meant I could come home and help my dad and his business—that took time— because Youngston was a 20 minute drive from East Liverpool.

ES: Now was—in high school—was that one of your aspirations—was to—what was—you know —to study philosophy or what was one of your aspirations before you left high school?

BM: You know, I didn't know I was really mixed up between being an engineer—and doing radio stuff—and also philosophy and ministry and the possibility of going to seminary. So, those two were tugging all the time and it wasn't until I got halfway to probably— I sat and figured out —okay this seems the most interesting this is what I'm going to do.

ES: Which was?

Bm: The ministry. I still did a little bit radio stuff but not much. Yeah—that's about all.

ES: Okay. And then how did your relationship to religion change during high school? Did it change at all or were you still going to church every Sunday?

BM: Even though high school we are just— we were there every Sunday. During the second world war there was some controversy about our congregation —because it was a German congregation and in fact I was baptized at a German service —although the German services were not central at that time, they were still a strong element —and there was, in the community, a lot of derision of that congregation because of being that German church. That was—as I say—a playoff of the world war.

ES: And that was when you were in high school?

BM: Well, I guess a little before high school because I graduated from high school in 54. So, so yeah that would've been little bit before.

ES: Okay, so tell me a little bit about when you graduated from high school—you're going to this Ohio State and then—

BM: No Ohio University. Athens, Ohio.

ES: Okay and tell me a little bit about how you made the decision to go into the ministry—

BM: I was doing a lot of theater as a kid in high school and our theater guy—are you ready—his name was —I don't remember much but I remember the important stuff —his name was Spencer Stanley Steam Rod the third (?). He was this huge—bumbling pile of blubber who could roll across the floor without touching it. He was a real—he had real ability in theatre and I did couple of major plays in the last couple years in high school and when it came time to college he wanted me to go to Ohio University because— do you need to switch—

[Referring to switching the camera memory card]

ES: Yes give me two seconds sorry.

BM: That's alright take your time

[A long Pause while fixing the camera]

ES: Okay, we're back to business

BM: Okay—Spencer Stanley Steam rod Junior(?)— he wanted me to go to Ohio University because they had an outstanding theater program that's why when I got there I got into the radio program because they just built a new speech and theater building and in it was the radio station and so I started working at the radio station— but it was basically because of Dr. Steam Rod(?) who got me to Ohio University.

ES: Okay and then so then once you're there—what got you to go Youngstown how did you look into it and you make that decision?

BM: (coughing) There was a pastor in Youngstown at the big disciples of Christ Church first Christian Church and he was a spellbinding of a preacher and I got to know his son in the radio station —at Athens— and after I decided that I had to go someplace else because I was getting too involved in the radio station —he encouraged me to look at Youngstown because his dad was pastor right next to the campus —and so I ended up doing that—I went to meet his dad and his dad took me and introduced me to both the

registrar and the president of Youngstown at the time. So I decided to do that and the president got me a job as the secretary to the Philosophy Faculty at the university—so it was—and with the closeness to home it was a good fit.

ES: And is that when you met your wife when working?

BM: We were both involved in working at—next door to each other—she was the secretary to the head of the psychology department and I was in the philosophy department right next door on—the offices were on the second floor of an old quonset hut —and that's where we met and I've been making trouble for her ever since.

ES: And is that how you knew you wanted to be a reverend?

BM: I suspect that was about the same time that I decided to give up radio and going that direction—yea. As I remembered it was always in the background— it was always in the background— my mother wanted me to be a pastor in the worst way so, if you know if I missed being—paying attention to some of it she made sure I remembered so—if you're trying to find that I can tell you at 11 o'clock on the 13th of December I got hit by a lightning ball there wasn't anything like that okay.

ES: So you just—you were at Youngstown or?

BM: Either that or when I left Ohio— I was in the philosophy which was the normal process that you would do as a pre-ministerial student so you just did it.

ES: So, who was the most influential people in within your religious studies?

BM: Do you mean historical people?

ES: People around you at the school.

BM: Oh at the school.

ES: Well you were studying to become a revered.

BM Well you're talking about two things —one is what you're undergraduate classes is—you know, to be a pastor normally you have to have an undergraduate degree and then a graduate degree from seminary which is —that where most of your true training go on in seminary. In the in the college, I was in the philosophy department would say that the classical Philosophy people—you know— Plato, Socrates, the whole list of the classical philosophers.

ES: So you got your degree in philosophy and then you went to seminary school?

BM: Yes that's right—that's correct. My degree was in philosophy— a duel major in philosophy and sociology—and then in the seminary you didn't have a major.

ES: and where did you go to seminary school (???)?

BM: Hammond Divinity School which is —wass then a part of Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio—and Wittenberg was a church—a school of the Lutheran Church. I went there because the dean of the school —Elmer Fly(?) was really fine fine person. I instantly liked him. He spent most of his time being concerned—although I was married—you know a lot of the kids that were in the seminary were not— he was insistent that he'd find wives for all the men in the seminary so that they didn't go out to parishes unmarried because he felt that would be a disaster (coughing).

ES: What years were you in the seminary school?

BM: (long pause) 58 to 62

ES: and what—I'm sorry go ahead

BM: Go ahead. No I Just—

ES: No, I was just going to ask while you were in seminary school, what do you think was the most difficult things you faced as you were studying to become ordained?(grandfather clock strikes)

BM: Greek and Hebrew.

ES: Learning Greek and Hebrew.

BM: No, trying to (coughs).

ES: What about personally did you struggle anything in seminary school with faith?

BM: Greek and Hebrew.

ES: Okay. And so while you were seminary school did they—obviously you have to have leadership skills—you know—in order to preach and so where do you think you developed those skills—did you develop them in seminary school? — I guess what I'm asking is how did you know you had the skills to be a leader?

BM: I tried hard not to be a leader. (pause) I tried hard always to help people try to reach the stage of development in which they could develop themselves—that they could do things for themselves. So, I don't like the word leader. You know, a leader to me is someone who marches out in front of a group of people and tells them what to do—I never did that. I—if I was anywhere I was in the back of the bunch of people saying let's keep going folks as long as we agreed on the goal, we're going to get there together. But I don't like the word leader.

ES: Okay. (grandfather clock sounds) So you're in the seminary school until 62?

BM: 62

ES: and then what happens after you leave the seminary school?

BM: I was sitting down one night in late 62 to accept a call a Lutheran Church in Indiana. I can't remember the name of the town—you can look it up if you want to—it was a town along the Ohio border where their claim to fame was—and still is today— the largest casket manufacturing company in the world. It's still there today. I was sitting down to accept a call to that congregation and the phone rang and it was a friend of mine on the faculty of Wittenberg who was a sociologist and he said, did you accept that call to Indiana yet? I said I was sitting at the typewriter ready to start. He said well don't—come over here and have breakfast with me in the morning. So, I was trusted him and so I quit doing my letter and I went over and had breakfast with him and he said I just got back from a meeting in New York and said—I met a guy there who is looking for an assistant and is he is in Cleveland Ohio and he is a Methodist pastor and he is running a thing called the regional church planning office, and he wants a Lutheran for a major study they're doing in Akron, Ohio. He said I think you should at least go talk to him—so I made arrangements drove to Cleveland. It was a good interview, we had a good time, he was brillant guy and I remember leaving— I had asked only one question. I asked how long do you spend every year raising the money to keep this organization. Lyle (?) shot back at me—in about 10 minutes. Well, I remember going home that night and saying to Char when I got home—the only thing bad about it is that—you know—he is spending a lot more than 10 minutes. Well, I ended up (coughs) going to work as Lyle's assistant director to the regional church planning office (pause) and after I had been there about two year, I went to one day to board meeting in December when Lyle(?) has laid out what he wanted to do for the next year and they went around the table, one after the other—well I can come up with $20,000, I can come up $15,000, so I can come up before—well these were church executives and in about 10 minutes he had all the money for the next year. He's a brilliant guy, we have been at that time became lifelong friends and Lyle (?) was a graduate of Madison Wisconsin— and he had an advisor that convinced him to get five masters degrees rather than one PhD—because they said to him that with a PhD you don't learn anything new, but with a Masters degree you always have to dig in and learn something new. And that's what he did.

ES: Okay

BM: He's brilliant—we became lifelong friends and unfortunately tomorrow I'm supposed to be at his memorial service over in Naperville.

ES: I'm sorry for your loss.

BM: Yes Thank you. He was a neat man. So I spent 4 years there with Lyle (?) from 63'-64'— I guess three plus, and then in November 65' we came to Chicago.

ES: Tell me a little bit about how that came about that. How did you find out you're going to be moving to Chicago?

BM: When I was in Akron, I belonged—my church was Holy Trinity, a big downtown Lutheran Church in Akron Ohio, and the two pastors were Carl Ulying (?) and Bob Stegall (?) who the senior pastor and Carl was called to be pastor of Christ the King in the loop in Chicago—and before he left he said, will you come with me to Chicago? — and I said well we can talk about it and why don't you get there and when you figure out what you need and then we'll talk about and so he and we talked and they called me also as a pastor of Christ the King in the loop in November beginning November 65'.

ES: So you were working Christ the King

BM: YES.

ES: So kind of leading up to 68'—you were working with the church and what was starting to happen around 68' —of you —remember what were you dealing with you know?

BM: What was I dealing with? Okay I was dealing with our young adult ministry—you know—I was closer to your age than my age and when I went there that was what I was to do because there're so many young adults in the loop and some looking for a center of involvement so we had space before the church moved his whole operation to the 25 W. Jackson. We have a smaller space there and it was run evenings by young adults and—that got transferred when the church moved over there —that got transferred over and continue and the young adult ministry consisted of that activity at the Kings corner and then also on Sunday evening we had gathering at our condo— apartment rather— which was at 900 Lakeshore Drive— just north of where your school started because your schools up there in the early days the very beginning—and our building is up there we had a young adult gathering from —oh— 4 o'clock until 2 o'clock in the morning at our apartment sometimes it was 400 kids. Not all at the same time— you know —in and out through and that's esentally—that was feeding back and forth the activity at the evening activities at the loop downtown location and we became a sort of—our family was then—ed—who was born in 65', the same month that we came to Chicago
(Phone rings loudly and interrupts; we discuss about the phone stop ringing)

ES: So, you're in Chicago now and obviously the Vietnam war is —you know —building up tensions—tensions are building up in 68' and so— I guess we'll fast forward to 68' a little bit and I kind of want you to talk about, what was your first experience as an activist and I know you don't like to use that word but— with everything going on in 68' in the early part, what were you doing with the church?

BM: Well just what I drew for you— the young adult thing. That was what I did. Well, in addition to because we are sitting on the ground floor and in the loop, we had—you know— we had more drunks per square inch come into the church and—you know— the coffee pot was always on— that was the nature of who we were as a congregation.

ES: And so you were help running the youth ministry?

BM: YES

ES: And so the youth were really involved with

BM: YES oh yes

ES: With the 68' movements so tell me a little bit about what you learned by mentoring these youth about 68' and about Vietnam—I'm sure they came to you with questions or— why is this going on?

BM: No because my attitude was— I was not there to tell these people want to do. I was there to let them develop their abilities and that's what happened in the 68' convention. (grandfather clock strikes) When all of the riots broke out in Front of the Hilton on Michigan Avenue, I was actually at a Lutheran student meeting at Loyola University of all places and this was a national meeting of student leaders from campuses all over the country and I was one of the main speakers of that occasion. So, I was up at Loyola University one night when about —oh my—I guess 7 o'clock or so at night —and I stayed in phone contact with the people at the church and so they had a way of getting to me—this was before cell phones, you wouldn't know about that— and they called me and said— and I can just remember this, I remember the name of the guy I was talking to Al Sloboda (?)—and Al said we have trouble starting in front of the Hilton Hotel and the Cops are hitting and gassing people and they're running away to escape and some of them came here, so we're opening a clinic to help these people. and—you know—immediately I went into (??) adult mode and said now wait a minit Al— you're opening a clinic and you don't have doctors and you don't have nurses and you're going to treat people and you're going to put congregation, is that what I understand? I've forgotten the exact numbers but he said, we have somewhere in the range of 18 physicians and 30 nurses and then the question came, will that do sir? This was Al's way of telling me to go stuff it and that I didn't know what I was talking about which of course I didn't. They had enlisted doctors from University of Illinois medical school out on the west side and nurses through one contact that they had in the group with people out there and these doctors would come in and they were spending their time treating people. Well, by now I have had enough conversation with Al that I hung up the phone and I went downstairs and got my car and I drove down to the loop and parked my car and when I got there they had so many people in the building that had been gassed over on Michigan Avenue, that every body in the building including the doctors and the nurses were getting sick. One doctor said to me, I don't know what's happening in here and I said, well sir —I do. The ventilation system up there is sucking air through the building and recycling and putting it back in, so as the gas comes off these people's clothing and bodies and everything and so I said we got to decide that we're going to either turn off the air conditioner and open all the doors—it was August of course so this wasn't—I said we got to open all the doors or we got to figure out something else. So that's what we did, we had a few fans around the place and we got, we set fans in the doors and I changed the ventilation system so it

was sucking air out of the alley in the back of the building and that air was being sucked in now so in a half an to hour the place pretty well cleared out and I have no idea to this day how many people they treated there that night but it was I'm sure well into the hundreds it may have even been 500. It went on as I recall I didn't leave until something like seven or eight in the morning.

ES: What were you observing injury wise?

BM: People with bloody heads, arms that had been beaten by the Chicago police, and a lot of kids with head wounds because they'd been smarting off to somebody and got some wise cop banged them on the head.

(pause to fix camera)

BM: You know it was mostly those kinds of injuries that caused people to—some people just needed a place that was safe—you know —that they didn't feel that they were being chased. You know—I spent my time sitting at the front door—standing at the front door— so when occasion that night, although it wasn't any big large numbers, maybe a half a dozen or dozen of the Chicago police would walk up I would welcome them and asked if I could do anything to hel, I would offer them a cup coffee and—you know—I think they were made to feel welcomed—but I think it was also clear that I was not going to put up with any shenanigans in terms them trying to deal with issues with the kids. So, that's pretty much of what went on that first night and then the rest didn't go on until trial started— there was nothing going on until the trial started.

ES: So you only had that medical Station for one day?

BM: Yes.

ES: On the worst of the days?

BM: I can't remember the worst of the days but yes it was that it was the day where the police really—you know—Richard Dailey had gotten really pissed off because of some of the remarks at the convention and I think he sort of let the idea loose that the cops should clean up those streets and stop all the demonstrations and I think that's the day we're all hell broke loose in front of the Hilton— and that was the day— and I still don't know, I still have no idea where the heck those people came up with all those doctors nurses.

ES: Now what was your understanding of the youth protesting—like you were dealing with the youth but—what did you feel, was your understanding?

BM: Well, I was opposed to the war as a pastor so I guess I cheered them on from that aspect as much as possible. I remember one day, I was struggling with writing a sermon and I decided to title the sermon and I couldn't find anybody who could tell me how to do what I wanted to do—I wanted to convert the number of people, which was then 49,000

something that had been killed in Vietnam, and I finally found somebody at the Newberry center up on—I don't know — do you even know about a place called Bughouse Square? You got to be educated one of these things about Chicago. Bughouse Square is outside of Newbury library on the near North Side and it is the place where people would go for many many years and just do speeches— any subject— so it got it's name Bughouse Square. Do you know the name of the guy did early recordings for WT TW and WFMT— I've lost his name.

ES: I'm not sure.

BM: Well, he used to go to Bughouse Square and sit and record conversations he would have with people, the same way you want to do to make movies, only in those days it was only audio. He had a little (?? Unknown brand name) tape recorder, about this wide and about this thick, and he always carried three or four of them, because if somebody didn't want to talk to him he would say this is not going to hurt you and he would kick this thing across the road to prove to them that—you know—the machine was not going to do any harm. Then he would get another out of his trunk, which worked. Newbury library is that very fancy library and I got them to convert that 49,000 number for me into Herbrew. And I use that as my sermon title.

ES: This sermon about the Vietnam War?

BM: No, No. I didn't ever preach sermons about the Vietnam War. I tried to preach the gospel and occasionally, where applicable, using illustrations from the Vietnam War and questioning what we were doing there how we were going about it (grandfather clock rings) — questioning mainly the system that says we can do nothing wrong in the United States. Well, you can see what good I did it's still a problem isn't it?

ES: How did you feel about the Vietnam War?

GM: Well,I was opposed to it. Generally, I'm opposed to any war. I don't see that war does anything to get us—anything meaningful—that it only leads to well just pain and death and I mean—you know—my guess is that I would suggest that any person who thinks that war is justified should be sentenced to spend six months in Walter Reed Hospital and realize the pain of kids who come back with missing legs and arms. I just—just tell me what good comes out war there isn't I don't think.

ES: So, were you, as a pastor, involved in any of the peace movements—obviously you were opposed to the war—but did you get involved and any other piece movements leading up to the democratic convention?

BM: No. I had no time for that. I mean my time was really—you know—I spend 80 to 90 hours just doing the work of the congregation, so no I din't have tim for it

ES: But you certainly knew it was going on?

BM: I knew a lot that was going on that made the news, yes. I did not, certainly did not do anything to do sway what in most cases I agreed with the people. This is just not something that I had time for in that whole time.

ES: But you did—did you—how did you feel about the kids that were out protesting, do you think they were doing what was right in your mind?

BM: Sure. Anybody that would get out and march—you know those kids in Baltimore—anybody who goes out and draws attention to the evil in our world and tries to solve it, yea hooray! You know I will sit and cheer them on. I've been watching this stuff in Baltimore and cheering what some of those kids are doing. Now, when you get into the destructive phase, then I think you're in a different ballgame—you know I'm not sure that the destructive side of it really works. I'm unhappy that some people feel led to do things that way.

ES: And so when you say that, I think of Martin Luther King so how did you feel about him and?

BM: Sure. He was, he was a saint. He was a prophet—you know—I'm not sure that King was really (pause) the creator of the movement. I believe the King leaned heavily on Gandhi and his work in anti-violence but he was one who was willing to go to jail and do all of the rest of stuff to say —you know, what you're doing is not right and yeah the sad thing about it is that what King spent his life doing, these kids are still trying to do in Baltimore, Sir. So, it's with unhappiness that I sit at my age and watch that stuff going on and say, why in the hell are doing this kind of crap? Why in the hell hasn't the adults caught on. If you still are able to read newspapers, read the editorial in this morning's Tribune about the state of politics in Illinois and our inability to pass a resolution which would stop the politicians from gerrymandering district boundaries in Illinois and all that kind of crap in which they are doing as the Tribune states and no question about this, they're trying to keep their own places in order by—you know—making sure that they're going to be elected next time. And if they can't be elected any other way, they adjust the boundaries so they can be.

ES: And so, How did you feel about his assassination obviously it happen in 68'?

BM: I thought it was terrible. I thought it was not surprising because—you know—why do we have—well okay, I'll turn it back on you. Let's not talk about Martin Luther King, let's talk about the Pendleton girl. Would that be okay?

ES: Um. You can talk about it a little bit. I'm curious because it happen in 68' about Martin Luther. Obviously JFK.

BM: See, I think that the two are very much attached. She died in Chicago in 2012 or something. A 12-year-old girl she died in Chicago, Why? Because as a society we insist upon the right to give every idiot loose in this world a gun and as long as we keep doing that it doesn't matter whether it was in 68' or it was Martin Luther King. If it hadn't been

68', there were so many idiots running loose with a gun that ever place came and went he knew that his life wasn't worth half a plug nickel. He knew that. And the same thing is happening today. The only thing different today that I suspect—there are more of both, more idoits and more gun. We are doing the same thing to keep them free to do this kind of evil, to go into a school and shoot it up or into a theater and shooting it up because we have kids with some unbalanced view of what the world is and so instead of making some reasonable requirements for what it's going to take to—You know I don't how feel about this as you can see I

ES: Yea. We can come back to this.

BM: As you can see I feel very strongly about it it. I have not had a gun in my hand since I was sent—because I was chaplain at the Boy Scout camp and they sent me to the rifle range because I was the only one over 21 and could supervise kids on the rifle range.

ES: Sure. So going—we can touch back on this in a little bit. I'd love to

BM: You keep us on time—that's your job.

ES: So, you were obviously, you were working at the church you're seeing these youth coming in and—what was going though your mind when you like—you know—what were you feeling for these kids when they're coming in and they're injured but they're out there standing up for what they believe in?

BM: How are we going to help them? Well, I was concerned about two things, I was concerned about helping the kids and of course the medics and the guys were there to do that and the second thing, to keep them safe so that—you know—somebody didn't decide to march in the church and bash them for some reason and then thirdly, which was the last of my concerns but I was in the midst of a congregation that had just remodeled this space spending many of their last dimes to do it and so I was a little bit concerned that we try to keep the blood off the floor. The carpet was brand-new. One of the executives from our church came by a few days later and said, don't worry about the carpet—if you have to replace the carpet because you been here helping people, you call me I'll pay for it.

ES: and what was that like to hear that?

BM: It was great because I know first of all that what he was saying is—you're doing the right thing. (grandfather clock starts chiming) Your congregation is doing the right thing, not me personally.

ES: Did you feel that you were doing the right thing?

BM: (coughs) Absolutely. I feel that the church needs to be involved in the place where it is —I have a health problem. In 1998 my bladder was removed because of cancer and they did 13 hour surgery at Northwestern to remove my bladder and built a bladder out part of my intestine. Since then, I've had problems with urinary track infections and I have had finally about eight years ago they got them under control by putting a stent in

between my left kidney and my artificial bladder because the tube between the two were creating scar tissue. For the last, until three years ago, my surgeon at Northwestern always transferred that stent every six months (grandfather clock starts chiming) I have to put in a new one

ES: Does this—going into 68' about what you

BM: We are getting there.

ES: Okay.

BM: (grandfather clock starts chiming) After my surgeon retired, I wanted not to keep going downtown and so we got into—he suggested suggested a friend of his who is at Lagrange hospital over here and we started going with him, Dr. Moran, he's very good—when I first walked into Lagrange hospital there's a simple sign handwritten over the door that says—we are about Christ's healing ministry. You don't notice anywhere else in the place anything that's done like that but that sign is there.

ES: And so that was your mentality in 68'?

BM: Exactly.

ES: So you were just there?

Bm: This is a place of healing for Christ's peoples.

ES: I have a few more questions.

BM: That's fine. That's fine. Is it all right that the dog answers them?

ES: Ha ha. So you obviously worked hand and hand with both the youth and the police—how did you feel about the police? You know you are hearing about them beating these kids?

BM: Well, they were the enemies in my mind. They were—I have had some bad experiences with Chicago Police. It's a list too long to go into but I have had enough bad experiences—I was depending on the police approach to me, I was being civil with them at all times, but I also was never in some of these articles during the trial— they talk about me sitting there talking to the cops, (grandfather clock ringing), which I did on a regular basis. Many of the cops came in were neat as heck. I think with the police there is a mob mentality that when you get a whole bunch of them together, you can cause trouble.

ES: Now do— what did you want to accomplish in your efforts helping? Because you were there simply to—

BM: Keep People safe. The night of the stuff around the hotel was basically to keep—to get people who were hurt help, to if this was beyond the ability of the people who had come there that night to help from U of I, then we needed to be about getting them to place where help was available. I do not recall, I would call them emergency cases, I do not recall us having a lot of emergency cases that night.

ES: How do you think you personally made impact? Do you think you did?

BM: That's not for me to talk about. That's the business of the boss [points up to ceiling] I do and did what I could do the best I knew how and then I left the rest to him.

ES: So what was—what do you think was most going through your mind during that day of 68'? You're hearing these protests, you're hearing the media and just total—you know— craziness that's going on and what is going on in your mind, in the back of your mind, obviously your helping out but?

BM: Doing the best—like I said—that we could to assist them—(speaking to wife in the other room) Char, what is the name of the historic interviewer on WFMT, the guy that we still here all the time.

ES: We can, I can write that down and we'll look it up

BM: Alright. (hearing wife in the other room saying cuz I don't remember) He's on FMT at night ever once and a while. (wife says Studs Turkel) Studs Turkel. Do you know that name.

ES: Yes I do we've studied him. Did you ever hear him speak?

BM: Yes. I was in Bughouse square one night when he was talking to people?

ES: Was this around 68'?

BM: No.

ES: What do you feel was most misunderstood idea about the protests?

BM: Probably that they were worthless kids making noise when they should've been enjoying something constructive. I suspect the way that I would picture a number of people in society feeling about the kids. I saw them as people were grabbing all the rest of us by the throats and saying—you know—wake up, wake up and see what you doing wake up and see what's going on. No different today in Baltimore, absolutely no difference. (phone starts to ring) Charlotte will get this.

ES: So, all this time in 68’ you were–you’re not directly, you know, spreaking to the youth about their protests but you’re believing in what they’re saying. In what they’re doing.

BM: Sure Sure. I listen to them and sometimes you know there were some crazy people in those you know situations.

[The last minute the camera is being fixed, audio recording is stopped to resume once camera is back up]

ES: Sorry about that. Please continue.

BM: I decided —most of what I did when I was there was I was in the middle of what was going on and I was listening to people. If three cops come in, I’d sit down in the corner and listen to them. If three kids came who were deciding they were about to tear up something I’d listen to them and say maybe isn’t there another better way for you to use your energy then tearing down the Marshall Fields building? It was the same way with alcoholics—you know—I would talk to them, I would welcome them—you know—in some cases give them access to our telephones and if they started to bother me and I had to get straight with them it was real simple. I said folks if you want help to straighten out your life you tell me that. I said to until you really mean it— don’t fuck with my time because I’ve got more important things I think to do and that’s where we left—you know—they would come up and I’m serious now, I’d say do you really mean that now, they’d say yes and I’d say okay let’s go. I had worked with the people in the Illinois employment service which is around the corner from our church and I could send somebody over there and they would help get them into a program. If they got somebody that I sent that they couldn’t figure out they would call me say hey Willy, next time you get out here would you stop in here we got to talk to you about this one because he’s a problem that we’re not able to figure out, so I would go in and we would sit down and we look over the whole thing and say okay what are the possibilities of handling this situation, where do we have resources that we haven’t figured out yet. Let’s go! And we would figure out what to do and go get the person at do it. Some place in these files over her I have a ltter from a young man, I can’t say his name right now he was around the church for months and months and months and you know he is going to tear down this and tear down that and he was very helpful to me and the number situations. I didn’t have any recognition and in my recognition one day he just disappeared, gone poof. 30 years later I got a letter from him and on the stationary it — he was president of major engineering firm in Atlanta, Georgia. He said in that letter that he was writing to thank me because he said it was because you one day looked at me and said why don't you quit screwing around and get your ass to college where you ought to be. And he said, I decided to go to college in spite of you and here I am today, thank you.

ES: That’s great. So you—

BM: (grandfather clock strikes) That’s what makes it all worthwhile, you know and for every 10,000 people you meet, there’s one like that. The rest you hope that somewhere

you make a difference in somebody's life and that's how I handled everything that came at me.

ES: So, during 68'. Do you feel that you made you know an impact, do you you feel that you were in activist?

BM: No. I feel I was pointing directions to people. I didn't usually get as directive as I did with that one kid I said get your ass to college. I though that's what he needed to hear when I did it. More of what I did was gentle trying to say—you know—do you have different options than the ones you seem to be pursuing. And to try to listen to them so that they found a way— not my way, because that would never work if they did that— but their way.

ES: You were there to support and help?

BM: Support and help and guide. You know—hope the guy upstairs didn't rest of it.

ES: So that leads me to ask you maybe kind of look back at that experience and how do you think those events of 1968 changed you, if they did in any way?

BM: No, I don't think they did. no I don't think they did. You know from the events in 68' in August at the convention—you know—that was a big jump in the activity at our place and then it just it leveled off and when back to being what it normally was until the conspiracy trial across street and then it went up higher than it had been 68 because the trial was in the wintertime and the judges—I said —would not let any of the press be on the property so—you know—the press said they could wait in our place and stay warm and soak up coffee until something happened across the street.

ES: and that trail was in response to 68'?

BM: Oh sure. The conspiracy seven trial.

ES: That was 69'?

BM: Since those were the guys who were arrested and charged with inciting riots and etc. etc. the whole 9 yards. Sure. Sure. That was all that was all tied together.

ES: So, what are you most proud of in that situation?

BM: I'm proud that there was a congregation there to be able to provide the kind of witness that we did to those people. You know, Let me see if I can make that more poignant for you. Okay? In 19, I think this was 1969, because the trail was 70 (cough) this was the annual report of our congregation. I had called this guy Tom Willis (?) at the newspaper and I said Tom I need a piece for the front page of the annual report. Will you do something and send it back and an hour later on the fax machine was this. The title was not for the comfortable outsiders are not always happy with us, neither are we. Our

pastor laughs now and then, he also has an ulcer. One of our deacons is black, his wife is white. Quite a few of us are over 40, several of us are under 25. We have a men's luncheon club. The women's liberation groups meet at night. Most of us are sober, not all are serious. Some of our staff wear shoes, our music director plays rock'n roll organ. He also plays a lot of Bach and (??). The contemporary art around our altar disturbs some. So does the graffiti on the removable walls of our Friday night coffee house. We have a efficient coffeemakers, a great sound system, dimmers on our switchboard, close circuit television, a stove, a refrigerator. Our glass walls and storefront location make listening for the still small voice. A little difficult, but we try. Uur main businesses felt. We give it whenever possible. We need yours. Okay. That's I think a summary our congregation.

ES: Obviously you saw a lot about 68' and so what do you think is the most positive about the demoncrative convention in 68'?

BM: Positive? I'm not sure. I think it's a positive experience when you put 3000 politicians in room and expect anything good to come of it. I'm not sure, I think when we put 300 or whatever it is politicians in one room in Springfield and expect anything good to come out of it. So, I'm sure that there's anything positive in a convention like that. If there's anything positive in terms of what occurred do those nights in front of the Hilton— you know—the theme of those nights was those kids chanting and the whole world is watching. The first war was fought on color television every night and the night newscasts before you were born was about Vietnam. Did we shut down Vietnam because it became too expensive in terms of our commitment with our people because they didn't want anymore to see this in their living rooms every night. I think it's a possibility. I think it's a very strong possibility that the Vietnam War was ended for that reason. It became too expensive in the psyche cost to America to keep doing it. So in that sense, that may be a positive. Its— is it another positive that you know there may have been some reform in the Police Department because of the events outside the Hilton because the whole world was watching. I don't think it changed Richard J Daley's mind. There's some question and recently because the governor just died, Dan Walker, and I saw him it being attributed to him that he said that it was a police riot on Michigan Avenue, I'm not sure that's true because I was thought that it was the Warren commission in Washington that was set up to look at the whole situation in 68' and I always thought that they were the ones came out and said there it was a police riot in front of the Hilton hotel. I'm not sure but the fact remains that I think that was something that Chicagoans were not ready to swallow and so from that standpoint it might make it positive.

ES: How did you in 68' especially with all this, how did you stay calm within all of this?

BM: That was my job, you know. I could've stayed calm with the building burning down in those days because that was my job is to you know be a presence, to support the congregation I was working with, to do what I think they wanted me to do—you know— by the way I was part of the staff that wore shoes in those days, I wasn't the other part. That was what my job was. We were always in trouble for other reasons with the national Lutheran Church and one year they called us to me in Philadelphia and when the church council and I met to decide who's going to do this, I said why don't we send Tom Willis

and I said you know, I think it would be interesting because it will be a surprise because they want me there because they want to jump down my throat. Tom walked into that room and sat down at the end of the table the guy that was chair of the committee and the other end said well, where is your pastor. He's back in Chicago being our pastor, where sure he'd be Sir? Okay. Flush. All done. That's what I saw as my role as being the glue that kept the whole thing together without being a leader you know, lining people up in a row saying let's go do this.

(grandfather clock strikes)
ES: And how do you feel in that position that you were given—you acted—how do you feel you did as the position you were at the time of 68'?

BM: Well, first of all my answer to that would be one in 68', I didn't have time to worry about it because there was going to be another explosion an hour later.

ES: Looking back at it?

BM: Looking back at it, it wasn't a thing that bothered me, it wasn't a thing I thought about. I thought about how can I do this the best way, how can I get the best job done. How can I stay out of the way so that my people can be who they are as a congregation. That's my job as a pastor.

ES: What parallels do you see between 1968' and now? We kind of talked about that a litte bit but.

BM: Do you want my crypt answer to that? In 68' and now in 2015 the kids are in the street marching and saying you folks have fucked it all up and in 68' or 2015 we still aren't listening. So probably, my answer to that would be there is not difference. The same problem. The same people are the root of the problem. You know, the same kids are out there saying you all have fucked it up.

ES: So if you could give them advice today, what would you say to them? The kids that are going out and protesting for what—standing up for what they believe in.

BM: Go for it. Go for it with everything in you. With the hope that this time maybe it might be different. I don't know what else to tell you. I don't know what else to tell them, because if you tell them that what they're doing is impossible, that's not going to do anything except make them mad—so why bother. You know.

ES: My last question for you is why did you decide to come on board for that 1968' project?

BM: For your thing, you mean?

ES: For our 68'?

BM: Well, first of all because of friend of mine you know, I knew him what's his name, Stan David, I think I knew back then but then he talked to Bob Shaner (?) who lives up the street here in Hinsdale and Shaner suggested that because of what happened with our church that I would be one that you would be interested in talking to. And Shaner just called me and said this is something you should do. My second reason would be—I have always had a high regard for Columbia College and its growth as a school and so that anything I can do to help you guys—you know.

ES: Personally for you, is there any connection or anything that you like to let people know about 68' and what you were involved with?

BM: No. My only thing that conclusion would be that I would say to you that the story of what happened to Christ the King during the conspiracy trial is a much more interesting story then the one we just finished so sometime if you want another project, I've got books full stuff that are letters from people that were really upset with what we were doing and the answers that our church council came up and articles from national magazines that all as a result what we did. So if you would be interested in doing something like that, I'd be happy to see.

ES: Is there anything else you'd like to say about 68'?

BM: No. There's a picture of the trial for example. The end of the trial when it ended. That picture was on the cover of the front page of the New York Times.

ES: Wow! Well Thank you very much for your insight on 68'.

BM: No thank you for coming. Julie is always happy when somebody comes to play with her and I'm always happy when somebody comes to talk to.

(ends with Approximately 24 seconds of captured conversation)